

— THE —
Suwannee Democrat.
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second-class matter.

Florida got through the Christmas
holidays with only three or four kill-
ings—man-killings, not hog-killings.

Only two changes in State officers at
Tallahassee next Monday—Gilchrist
succeeds Broward as governor and
Trammell succeeds Ellis as attorney
general.

The United States troops evacuate
Cuba today and this month the gov-
ernment of the Island will be turned
over to its own people. It remains to
be seen if they are fit for the task.

The State Educational Association is
in session at Gainesville this week and
the attendance is very large. Enthu-
siasm for the school interests is always
a sure sign of a progressive common-
wealth.

Southern Italy and the neighboring
island of Sicily were overwhelmed by
an earthquake last Monday which was
one of the most terrible disasters in all
human history. More than one hun-
dred thousand lives were lost, perhaps
twice as many wounded, the large city
of Messina destroyed and other dam-
age on a proportionate scale.

Brevard county held a "wet or dry"
election last week and voted out the
liquor traffic by a majority of four to
one. The county voted "dry" two
years ago and the elimination of the
saloons resulted in such improved con-
ditions that the people emphasized their
approval last week with a force not to
be mistaken. They generally do it that
way in such cases. Doubtless there
isn't a "dry" county in Florida that
could be induced to re-establish the
evil reign of the liquor traffic.

Public opinion is still a force in this
country. The Coopers, father and son,
charged with the murder of ex-Senator
Carmack in Nashville, Tenn., have been
refused bail and must stay in jail. Un-
der ordinary circumstances people of
their social standing too frequently
succeed in convincing the court that
their offence is a bailable one and they
are permitted to go at large until they
are brought to trial. But it didn't
work this time, and public opinion,
which was very nearly one way, doubt-
less had something to do with it.

Editor Sparkman, of the Taylor Coun-
ty Herald, has known General Gilchrist
intimately for twenty years and says
he will make the best governor the
State ever had. This is high praise,
but our governor-elect has been a re-
markably successful man in conducting
his private affairs, and that, too, on a
rather extensive scale, and as modern
conditions require a first-class business
man at the head of the State, General
Gilchrist's wise management of his
own affairs is a guarantee that he will
be equal to the task ahead of him at
Tallahassee.

Every saloon in the States of Ala-
bama and Mississippi closes its doors
today in obedience to the mandate of
the people speaking through their leg-
islatures, and as revolutions never go
backward it is doubtless true that those
doors will remain closed forever. There
were not many saloons remaining in
either State, for local option had been
driving them out with marvelous rap-
idity of late years and it was but
carrying out the logic of the policy to
abolish them all. With whiskey hard
to get we may confidently expect a
large falling off in crime and most other
forms of sin and sorrow in both of
those States and a corresponding in-
crease in pretty nearly every thing
else that is good, for the stuff that
steals away the brain is the devil's
most active and efficient agent on this
earth. It should be a joyous New
Year's day in every home in Alabama
and Mississippi, and even the greater
part of the boozefighters now plunged
in gloom, a year hence, after they have
been cured of their distemper and
emancipated from slavery to their cost-
ly and unnatural thirst by the removal
of the temptation of the open saloon,
will be glad of this day's work.

PROMISE OF THE NEW YEAR.

The world begins a new year today
and it is nip and tuck between the pes-
simist and the optimist as to which has
the best of the argument in forecast-
ing the future. Undoubtedly it is a
profoundly discontented world, but, for
that matter, it always has been and
probably always will be. "Man never
is, but always to be blest." Here in
this country where we have a vast and
comparatively new land to develop the
nation has been on an industrial and
speculative spree for the past decade,
and in the general rush for wealth it
was every fellow for himself and devil
take the hindmost. In our fierce greed
we forgot some of the fundamental
verities and set up the false god Mam-
mon as a better deity than the one our
fathers worshipped; but last year we
were brought up with a round turn and
got a jolt that made the whole fabric of
our industrial and commercial life quiver
with the shock. As a result we have
ceased to splurge, the promoters are
out of a job and hustling for meal tick-
ets, the get-rich-quick tribe has disap-
peared and the country, sobered by its
scare, is moving quietly along on a
safer basis and by sounder methods.
Our resources are all here; we are the
richest people in the world and in no
other land are there so many opportu-
nities for well-directed energy.

Roosevelt, with his fuss and furor
and boastful strenuousness, well symbol-
izes the era from which the nation is
just emerging, and we hope with all
our heart that Mr. Taft, who is about
to succeed him, will, in his calm, solid,
simple character and safe and conser-
vative methods be a true type of the
new era upon which we are entering.
We need just that type in our whole
business and social life, and when it
becomes the rule we will know both
contentment and prosperity as a peo-
ple.

We are well away from the panic
which prostrated things last year and
there is no prospect of another for
years to come. The business of the
country is readjusting itself to the new
conditions and the shrinkage has
brought surprisingly little suffering
and enforced idleness. Booms are ev-
erywhere conspicuous by their absence,
but business is fairly good, the indus-
trial plants are nearly all in operation,
thrift and economy are the keynotes,
prodigality and waste have gone to
join the "busted" booms, and the new
year begins with the nation on a sound
basis and content to move forward by
conservative methods and at consid-
erably less than breakneck speed.

All things considered, the optimist
has the better of the argument.

We have been anxious to hear some
strong and leading Southern publica-
tion sound a clear and decided note on
the tariff as a proper policy for the
democratic South, and here it is from
the Manufacturers' Record, which,
more than any other periodical, is in
intimate touch with our industrial in-
terests and their needs:

"The time has come when every busi-
ness man in the South—whether he be
merchant, manufacturer, farmer or
banker—interested in the welfare of
this section should unite in a demand
for a full measure of tariff protection
to the interests of the South. This
section has so long permitted others to
make our tariff laws that there is dan-
ger that our own people may not real-
ize how seriously this section would be
hampered and crippled by a tariff re-
vised in the interest of the East and
West as against the South. Such
things have been done before. They
will be done again unless the people of
the whole South awake to the danger
of the situation."

Here is a sensible and timely para-
graph from the Waycross, Ga., Her-
ald:

"Occasionally some fellow who left
the farm several years back 'for better
or worse' and who has progressed in
experience, multiplied his family and
decimated his fortune, returns to the
soil and he hugs it like a penitent prod-
igal. A man who has struggled in
town or city for a few years to support
a large family on a single wage is well
prepared by training in economy self-
denial and energy to do well on the
farm where all the boys and girls from
two years up become helpers and even
the wind and rain and sun conspire to
help coax a living out of mother
earth."

The observing traveler through the
South of recent years cannot fail to
notice the want of correspondence or
proportion between the towns and cit-
ies and the country districts in the mat-
ter of up-to-date development. The
latter lag far in the rear of the former
and the unnatural disparity does not
speak well for the stable and perma-

nent prosperity of this section as a
whole. The truth is that the stupen-
dous Southern industrial boom during
the past twenty years has been accom-
plished largely at the expense of our
agricultural interests and our rural
population. Public works and indus-
trial plants of all kinds have proved a
heavy and continuous drain upon the
latter; the prospect of good wages,
better living and enlarged facilities
generally in the towns was an irresist-
ible temptation to an army of boys and
young men on the farms; in number-
less instances their parents and the
whole family followed them and the
result was that the towns were quickly
distended with population and the farms
suffered corresponding loss. This was
all well enough while the boom lasted
and times were good, but the boom has
"busted" and times are no longer
good, at least not to brag about. And
with the ebbing of the tide we find in
nearly every Southern community of
size a considerable surplus population
originally drawn from the country,
practically stranded, with no demand
for its labor, hanging on as best it can,
eking out a scant subsistence with no
prospect of betterment for the future.
If this surplus would go back to the
farms it would bring large relief to the
situation. We have had our industrial
boom in the South and it has increased
the sum of our wealth enormously, but
the development has not been even nor
general. What we need now is an ag-
ricultural revival, a widespread move-
ment back to the farms to restore the
economic equipoise; for, as the soil is
the original source of all wealth, so the
farmer, even though the price of his
crops just now may yield him scant
profit, can at least be independent if he
farms intelligently, and that is more
than he can be while dependent on the
uncertain tenure of a "job" in town.

The latest measure suggested to cir-
cumvent that common enemy of law-
abiding people, the modern improved
and revised pistol-toter, comes from
Congressman Lewis, of Tennessee, who
proposes to introduce a bill in congress
making it a felony to carry a pistol in
the District of Columbia. If this bill
should pass it is expected that it will
inspire the various State legislatures
to take similar action in dealing with
this great evil, but even in that event
the ever-present problem of the en-
forcement of the law would still con-
front us, and with laxness in that re-
spect we would probably discover that
pistol-toting as a felony has no more
terrors for the law-breaker of that
kind than pistol-toting as a misdemea-
nor. The present law on the subject
would doubtless be sufficient to break
up the evil practice if it were rigorously
and impartially enforced and imprison-
ment as well as heavy fine made the
sure penalty in every instance. But
the decent, law-abiding people of this
country are so harried and bedeviled
by the pistol-toters and their foul, mur-
derous work that they would consent
to the most extreme measures to get
rid of the breed, and if making the of-
fence a felony will accomplish the end
or even contribute, appreciably to it,
they would doubtless approve such a
law. On this subject the Pensacola
Journal says:

"The Journal most earnestly hopes
that the Florida legislature will take
this matter up in April. Pistol-carry-
ing should be made a crime with a se-
vere penalty attaching. When this
shall have been done it is safe to say
that the heartrending tragedies which
have so often disgraced the State will
be a thing of the past."

William J. Bryan is booked for a
speech at the Tampa fair on February
4 and it is given out that he will dis-
cuss the future of the democratic party
in an impersonal way, taking the les-
sons and results of the last campaign
as the basis for his remarks. A big
theme and a big man to handle it! But
we hope Mr. Bryan will take advan-
tage of the opportunity to go into one
branch of the subject of which he was
rather shy during the late unpleasant-
ness. We refer to the tariff. When
he talks in Tampa he will be a State
where citrus fruits and Sea Island cot-
ton are among the chief money crops.
Egyptian cotton of practically the same
variety is coming into this country du-
ty free, also foreign grown oranges
and other fruits. The result is disas-
trous to our home producers, but as
democrats they are confronted by the
good old democratic doctrine of tariff
for revenue only, hence they are be-
tween the devil and the deep sea, with
their private interests on one side and
their party loyalty on the other. They
sorely need some good advice in such
a strait, and Mr. Bryan, who is still
the party Moses (although with indif-
ferent success in that role heretofore),

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will have a timely opportunity at Tam-
pa to clarify the situation and tell a
poor democrat what to do in such a di-
lemma. Congressman Clark, who is a
good democrat, wants protection, and
all over the South where there are in-
terests to suffer from foreign compe-
tition the genuine republican protective
spirit is erupting at an alarming rate.
Let the clarion voice of W. J. B. be
lifted at Tampa on this paramount
issue.

Discourage the local companies of
Jacksonville and be prepared to see
them lose heart, to see the city some
day handed over to a mad mob.—Times-
Union.

Very true, indeed! It is short-sighted
policy on the part of any community to
refuse ample and cheerful support to
its local military organization. The
old notion of "tin soldiers" is only held
now by shallow and unthinking people;
the other kind understand that our
State troops are soldiers in the best
sense of the word who are called upon
in grave emergencies to discharge du-
ties of the highest usefulness to the
community, and that in these days of
mob violence and widespread contempt
for law, town or city fortunate enough
to possess one or more well-disciplined
military companies has an asset of
great value which it cannot afford to
neglect.

Swear off from all your bad habits
and get right with God and man today;
and do it sincerely, without mental re-
servation, for this may be your last
New Year's day on this narrow isth-
mus called Life between the two eter-
nities. Even though you break the
resolution it is better to have made it,
for it shows that you yet have a con-
science and moral stamina and recog-
nize the call of duty. So long as that
is true you are still worth saving and
the star of hope continues to shine on
the horizon of your future. It is the
man who is reckless of all higher
things; who wallows in sensuality; who
knows no moral restraint; gives full
rein to the evil within him and lives
and dies like the animals around him,
who makes no good resolutions to guide
his conduct and lift him to a higher
level of life.

The Democrat has received the latest
quarterly bulletin of the Marion, Ala.,
Institute, which contains the address
recently delivered before the students
of that institution by Judge Hocker of
the supreme court of Florida, whose
theme was the Bible and the proper
way to study it. In this age of wide-
spread religious doubt and negation it
is refreshing to mind and soul to read
these strong, clear, simple sentences of
one of the most highly-trained and lu-
minous intellects in Florida uttered in
support of the old faith of our fathers,
and to realize that that faith is still the
guiding star of undiminished bright-
ness for such great men as the author
of the address, while lesser minds are
groping bewildered in the thick mists
of skepticism or plunged in the deeper
night of scientific materialism.

No barbarism of the Dark Ages when
man was little better than a breech-
clouted savage surpassed in cruel cow-
ardice the vile, dastard work of the
night-riders of Tennessee and Ken-
tucky in the good year 1908 in civilized
America. They are the shame and
disgrace of the nation and nothing short
of the corrective influence of the hang-
man will ever reform them. They need
a Jeffreys on the night-rider circuits
in Tennessee and Kentucky, for even
his ruthless methods could be better
borne with less harm to the social state
than the bloody despotism of the han-
ded scoundrels who murder and whip
and burn and war on women and chil-
dren as well as men in those two
States.

Here is a genial little Christmas res-
olution from Editor Holly, of the San-
ford Herald, which has a soft musical
ring about it we seem to have heard in
the long ago when life was in its
spring and about once a year along
about the first of January ever since.
But, though fractured times innumera-
ble, it has an infinite capacity for be-
ing successfully repaired and made as
good as new, as we personally know,
and it is a noble resolve which we
should all make even more frequently
than we do. Says Editor Holly:

"The editor of this primrose sheet
having turned over a new leaf and
pasted it down, will now proceed to fill
it full of noble deeds and other inter-
esting memoranda."

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